

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
Missouri River Division, Corps of Engineers  
P.O. Box 103, Downtown Station  
Omaha, Nebraska 68101

MRD-R 870-1-1

MRDPA

Regulation  
No. 870-1-1

1 June 1984

Historical Activities  
MRD AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL PROGRAMS

1. Purpose. To establish the general scope, elements, responsibilities and procedures for historical programs conducted by MRD and the Districts.

2. Applicability. This regulation is applicable to all organizational elements of MRD and the Districts.

3. References.

a. AR 870-5, Military History: Responsibilities, Policies and Procedures.

b. ER 870-1-1, Field Operating Agency Historical Programs.

c. AR 340-18, The Army Functional Files System.

d. AR 870-20, Historical Properties and Museums.

4. Program Objectives. The objectives of a historical program are to:

a. Develop and systematically maintain a data base of historical resources that document the evolution and impact on society of agency-related legislation, policies, programs, projects, practices and techniques.

b. Enrich employee and public understanding of Corps programs and activities through the preparation of historical publications and the use of retrospective data in public information activities and displays in agency offices and at visitor centers.

c. Enhance the morale, esprit de corps and proficiency of employees by broadening their perceptions of agency activities and strengthening understanding of the principles, concepts and traditions inherent in Corps programs.

d. Improve policy-making, management and administration through retrospective analysis of recurring issues, problems and decisions over periods of time.

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5. Responsibilities.

a. Division and District Commanders. Exercise overall supervision of the Division or District historical program by:

(1) Assigning responsibility for the day-to-day staff supervision of the historical program.

(2) Appointing the chairman and members of the Historical Committee.

(3) Reviewing and approving plans for historical projects and activities.

(4) Providing guidance to insure the historical program is conducted in accordance with established policies, goals, and objectives.

b. Staff Supervision.

(1) Chief, Office of Public Affairs. Has responsibility for the general management and support of the Division historical program.

(2) District Commanders. Designate the managers of the Districts' historical programs from within existing staffs. This manager will chair the Districts' Historical Committees in addition to their regular duties.

c. Division Historian.

(1) Division Activities.

(a) Provides staff support for all aspects of the Division historical program.

(b) Advises the commander on all historical matters.

(c) Develops written guidelines and controls governing the Division historical program.

(d) Maintains liaisons with organizational units to insure units' activities are recorded and documentary materials retained.

(f) Participates in the selection of any contract historians and administers the contract after award.

(g) Conducts the Division oral history program.

(h) Maintains the Division Historical File.

(i) Prepares and/or oversees the production of Division historical publications, including revision and update of the Division history every sixth year.

(j) Researches and writes special studies.

(2) District Activities.

(a) Monitors and gives guidance to District historical programs through periodic contacts and visits.

(b) Advises the Districts' Commanders on historical matters.

(c) Develops written guidelines and controls governing the Districts' historical programs.

(d) Establishes guidelines for identification and preservation of records and other historical resources.

(e) Conducts technical inspections of, and advises on, the Districts' historical files.

(f) Participates in the selection and oversees the work of any contract historians.

(g) Prepares and/or oversees production of District historical publications, including revision and update of the Districts' histories every sixth year.

(h) Conducts the Districts' oral history programs.

d. Historical Committees.

(1) Supports and gives guidance to the historical programs of the Division and Districts by:

(a) Formulating and evaluating ideas and suggestions for historical activities.

(b) Setting historical program priorities and schedules.

(c) Reviewing and approving drafts of historical publications.

(d) Advising and assisting in historical files acquisition and management.

(e) Preparing and assembling historical materials.

(2) Consists of representatives appointed by the Division Commander and the Districts' Commanders.

(3) Chairs will be appointed by the Division Commander and the Districts' Commanders.

(4) Will meet no less than twice each fiscal year with minutes taken of its deliberations.

(5) Minutes of each meeting will be retained in the Historical Files and a copy of each forwarded to the Division Historian prior to the next meeting.

e. Chiefs of Divisions and Separate Offices. Support the Division or District historical program by:

(1) Suggesting members for the Historical committee.

(2) Assisting in the identification of historical records.

(3) Helping to locate and evaluate historical properties.

(4) Submitting proposals for historical projects and activities to the Historical Committee.

(5) Reviewing and commenting on historical publications pertaining to their areas of responsibility.

(6) Seeking uses of historical analysis in policy formulation, program management, and general administration.

(7) Furnish the Division Historian prior to 1 March, historical data collected in Historical File described in 6a below.

6. Historical Resource Management. The following measures are essential to the management and preservation of Division and District historical resources:

a. Historical File. A central historical file for the collection and preservation of historical resources will be established in accordance with AR 340-18 and AR 870-5. The file should consist of but not necessarily be limited to the below listed items. Files will be set up in each office using file number shown below:

228-10 (Name of Div/Ofc) Historical File (Yr)  
COFF 31 Dec (Yr), trf to Div Hist 1 Jan (Yr) (Perm)

(1) A periodically updated bibliography of historical publications relating to the evolution of Division and District activities.

(2) Oral history interviews as well as lists of the names and addresses of prospective interviewees.

(3) An inventory that describes and gives the location of files, photographs, maps and other historical materials maintained in agency offices.

(4) An inventory of newspapers, manuscript collections, public records and other relevant materials retained by universities, state and local historical societies, public agencies, and other repositories.

(5) A collection of resource materials that will serve as the organization's memory bank.

(6) A narrative of significant events which occurred during the past year, in the words written and/or approved by the division chief.

b. Records Management and Library Services. The Division and Districts are encouraged to enhance records management systems by utilizing professional historians to:

(1) Help develop procedures and criteria for the evaluation, organization, retention and maintenance of historical records.

(2) Screen records targeted for destruction or shipment to regional archives in coordination with the Division or District Records Manager.

(3) Give guidance to scholars and other researchers who request access to agency records.

(4) Monitor historical literature to identify books, reports and periodicals that should be retained by Division and District libraries.

c. Historical Properties. Artifacts and other objects that serve as tangible reminders of the agency's accomplishments should be identified and preserved.

7. Oral History. The Division Historian will establish an oral history program consisting of interviews with active and retired commanders, deputy commanders, civilian employees, elected officials and leaders of local interest groups. The following measures are essential to the effectiveness of an oral history program:

a. Interviews must be conducted by professional historians familiar with the agency's mission, policies, programs and projects.

b. Each Division and District will conduct no less than three interviews per calendar year.

c. The Historical File will contain an annually updated list of the names, addresses and the telephone numbers of prospective subjects.

d. Interviewers will conduct background research and develop an interview agenda in cooperation with the subjects.

e. Interviewers will compile a list of key terms to insure proper spelling of names, places and the like.

f. A written consent and statement of restrictions must be obtained from the subjects.

g. All interviews will be taped, transcribed, edited and retained in the Historical File.

h. Copies of unrestricted transcripts will be made available to schools, historical societies and other interested institutions.

i. One copy of each interview will be forwarded to USACE (Hist. Div.) for inclusion in the Corps of Engineers Oral History Collection.

8. Division and District Histories. Division and District histories are a major priority of agency historical programs. The following measures are essential to the preparation of objective, accurate and comprehensive histories:

a. Following completion of a District or Division history, updates will be published at 5-year intervals.

b. All histories and updates will be prepared by either agency historians or contract professional historians.

c. The narrative will be fully documented and based on:

(1) Records retained in agency offices and federal archives.

(2) Books, articles, agency reports, government documents and other publications.

(3) Newspapers, manuscript collections and other sources retained by historical societies and other private and public repositories.

(4) Oral histories and consultations with active agency employees.

(5) Interviews with elected officials and key representatives of local interest groups.

(6) The Historical File.

d. The Division Historian will review manuscripts prior to their submission to the Chief, Historical Division, USACE.

9. Historical Monographs and Pamphlets. In addition to general histories and supplements, the Division and Districts are encouraged to prepare narratives of key agency activities.

10. Applied History and Program Support. The Division and Districts are urged to strengthen agency policy and decision-making by utilizing historical resources and analysis. The institutional "memory bank" of the agency and the skills of professional historians can be drawn upon to:

a. Learn lessons by comparing and contrasting the evolution and effectiveness of agency policies, programs and practices over long periods of time.

b. More clearly define the roots and subsequent growth of problems.

c. Strengthen current decision-making by analyzing the consequences of actions taken by former administrators.

d. Orient new commanders and other top management staff to the recurring challenges of their respective jobs.

12. Report Requirements (RCS-DAEN-AS-6). The annual summary report of District historical program activities required for each calendar year will be submitted for review to the Division Historian no later than 15 March of the following year. The report will include:

a. An overview of items compiled for the Historical File.

b. A listing of oral history interviews conducted and transcribed.

c. Progress on the preparation of histories, supplements and other publications.

d. Examples of the incorporation of historical subject matter in public information activities.

e. Historical activities planned for the forthcoming year.

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13. Available Assistance. The Districts will obtain guidance and advice in planning, implementing and conducting their historical programs by contacting the Division Historian.

/s/  
MARK J. SISINYAK  
Brigadier General, USA  
Commanding

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